

# THE HOMESTEAD BILL—ITS FRIENDS AND ITS FOES.

## SPEECH

OF

## HON. WILLIAM WINDOM, OF MINN.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, March 14, 1860.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. WINDOM said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: More than three months have elapsed since the representatives of the people of this great nation assembled at the capital, for the purpose of transacting the business of the country. Numerous subjects of vital importance to those whom we came here to serve stood out prominently before us, and demanded prompt attention. Among these I may mention a law granting the public domain in limited quantities to actual occupants; the protection of the lives and property of our citizens by judicious appropriations for the improvement of our rivers and harbors; wise and prudent national aid to a Pacific railroad by that route which is the most feasible, and which will contribute most to the development of the resources of the nation, and to the encouragement of its great agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing interests; simple justice to the Territory of Kansas, by her admission into the Union as a State without further delay; and a thorough and searching investigation of the alleged extravagance, profligacy, and corruption, of the present Administration.

The country had the right to expect, and did expect, that all these subjects, and many others which I might name, would receive from Congress careful and prompt consideration.

But what has been the spectacle presented to the country and to the world? How has the trust reposed in us by a confiding constituency been executed? Instead of proceeding at once, in an orderly and parliamentary manner, to organize the House, the Democratic party, which professes so much holy horror of the agitation of sectional questions—and which in my State fulminates so many anathemas against the Republican party, as the party of agitation—spent eight long weeks in making inflammatory and treasonable appeals to the already over-excited sectional passions and

prejudices of the nation. The sun could not be permitted to go down upon our first day's work, until Democratic orators on the other side had thrust the slavery question upon us, and proved their love of slavery by showing their disregard of the Constitution and the Union. During the entire eight weeks of disorder and chaos which reigned in this Hall, members of that party continued to repeat their daily threats of disunion, secession, and treason, until the country became disgusted with the farce, and only smiled derisively at the perpetrators of such egregious folly. Threats that, in the event of the election of a Republican President in 1860, they would "rend the Union from turret to foundation stone;" that such an election "ought to be resisted to the disruption of every tie that binds this Confederacy together;" that "if you (the Republican party) present your sectional candidate in 1860, *elect him as the representative of your system of labor*, and take possession of the Government as the instrument of your power in this contest of 'irrepressible conflict,' *we of the South will tear this Constitution in pieces, and look to our guns* for justice against aggression and wrong." Threats such as these, by being so often repeated, became stale and meaningless, and towards the end of the contest for Speaker failed to command enough of interest to excite even a smile. Denuciation and misrepresentation of the Republican party and its principles were freely indulged in by the other side, and answered, as such baseless charges deserve to be, by silence, and by orderly and persistent efforts to organize the House and proceed with the business of the country.

I do not allude to these things, Mr. Chairman, with the desire to give additional publicity to the disreputable conduct of the Democratic party; for I would gladly, for my country's sake, and the honor of her fair name, blot out the doings of that party during those eight weeks from the pages of history. I mention

them only for the purpose of expressing the hope, that as the Democratic party has sufficiently shown the true character of its professed conservatism and love of the Union, we may now be permitted to give our attention to those measures which are of some importance to the country.

All I desire to say at this time upon the exciting subject of slavery is, that while the people whom I have the honor to represent will not consent that the crack of the oppressor's whip, or the clank of the bondman's chains, shall be heard, or the footprints of the slave traced in any of the Territories of this nation, they do not intend or desire to interfere with the domestic affairs of the people of any other State. They are loyal to the Constitution, and they love the Union too well to enter into any discussion of its value or the costs of its dissolution. They feel that its blessings were purchased by the blood of their fathers, and shall be preserved, if need be, by their own.

Mr. Chairman, my time will not permit an extended discussion of the many questions which are presented to this Committee by the President's message and accompanying documents, and I will therefore confine myself to a few remarks on what I conceive to be the most important measure which can come before this or any other Congress—the bill granting “free homes to the homeless.”

It is difficult to comprehend, sir, how a measure so eminently just in itself, and so fraught with good results to all parts of the country, and to every class of our citizens, can find an opponent in or out of these Halls. And yet the records of the last Congress show that it did meet with active, determined, and persistent opposition from the Democratic side of this House, and from Democratic Senators at the other end of the Capitol. Although every Republican Senator, and every Republican member of the House, except Mr. Nichols, of Ohio, at the last session, voted for this measure, it failed to become a law. It is true that, by the votes of the Republican party and of a few Northern and Western Democrats, it passed the House, but when it entered the Senate, it met and grappled with the “Cuba bill,” and fell in the unequal contest, strangled by Democratic hands.

This struggle between the Republican party, as the friend of the toiling millions of the country, and the Democratic party, as the champion of the aristocratic, pampered, purse-proud few, who regard the laboring man as a slave, and estimate his importance only by the amount of money they can wring from his hard-earned pittance, is no new struggle. It is only a slight modification of that “irrepressible conflict”—as old as avarice itself—between the sons of toil, on the one hand, struggling for food and raiment, and for an humble home beneath whose roof they may shelter their wives and children, and grasping, insatiate capital, on the other, seeking to erect for itself luxurious palaces upon the bones and muscles and heart's

blood of those whom it has pleased to designate the “mud-sills” of society.

The struggle between capital and labor has ever been a fearful one. It has caused thrones to crumble, and brought the heads of tyrants to the block. But, alas! too often capital has prevailed in the contest, and labor has been crushed beneath the iron heel of oppression. The fate which this measure met in the Democratic Senate, and at the hands of Democratic Representatives, at the last session of Congress, shows the true position of that party in this great conflict.

An honorable Democratic Senator, [Mr. CLAY, of Alabama,] in a speech delivered some time ago, in the Senate, said:

“*Property* is the foundation of every social fabric. To preserve, protect, and perpetuate rights of *property*, society is formed, and Government is framed.”

Contrast this declaration of the principles of modern Democracy with the enunciation of the great truths of genuine Democracy by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*; and that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men.”

After having thus asserted the modern doctrine of his party as to capital, the same Senator, in speaking of the Convention which framed the Lecompton Constitution, thus expressed his opinions of the people:

“In my opinion, they [the framers of the Lecompton Constitution] would have acted in stricter accordance with the spirit and genius of our institutions, if they had not submitted it in whole or in part to the popular vote. Our fathers founded republican Governments in preference to democracies, not so much because it would be impracticable, as because it would be *unwise and inexpedient* for the people themselves to assemble and adopt laws.”

In another part of the same speech, in speaking of the fathers of the Republic, he says:

“They knew, from the examples furnished by Greece and Italy, that it is impossible, in a pure democracy, to remove the causes, or control the effects, of faction; that an absolute majority is oftener swayed by passion than by reason; that *its voice is oftener that of a demon than of God*; that it is the most *cruel, rapacious, intolerant, and intolerable of all tyrants*.”

Another honorable Democratic Senator, and a leader of his party, [Mr. HAMMOND, of South Carolina,] in elucidating the difference between the two classes represented by labor and capital, says:

“In all social systems, there must be a class to do the menial duties, and perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect, and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, and

'fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class, which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sills of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other except on this mud-sill.

"The poor ye always have with you; for the man who lives by daily labor, and scarcely lives at that, and who has to put out his labor in the market, and take the best he can get for it—in short, your whole class of manual laborers and operatives, as you call them, are essentially slaves."

If additional evidence is demanded, that in this struggle between labor and capital the Democratic party has arrayed itself on the side of the latter, I will quote one or two more extracts from good Democratic authority. Mr. Calhoun, the great leader and patron saint of modern Democracy, in a speech delivered in the United States Senate, in 1838, used this language:

"Many in the South once believed that it [slavery] was a moral and political evil; that folly and delusion are gone. We see it now in its true light, and regard it as the most safe and stable basis for free institutions in the world. It is impossible with us that the conflict can take place between labor and capital, which make it so difficult to establish and maintain free institutions in all wealthy and highly-civilized nations where such institutions as ours [slavery] do not exist."—*Appendix Congressional Globe*, 1837-'38, page 62.

This, sir, was the first distinct enunciation of the principles which now form the real platform of that party. The *Richmond Enquirer*, a leading and influential journal of the Democratic party, said:

"This is but part of our programme; we mean to show up free society—to show that the little experiment made in a corner of western Europe has signally failed. Then we will invade our North, where a similar experiment is making—not made. We will point to a thousand premonitory symptoms of ultimate failure, and always adduce the Abolitionists themselves as our witnesses. In fine, we intend, from time to time, to institute a searching comparison between slave society and free society, and to prove that the former is the old, almost universal, normal, and natural, condition of civilized society."

A Democratic paper published in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1854, called the *Lynchburg Republican*, in speaking of this conflict between capital and labor, says:

"And is there no solution—no harmonizing remedy?" \* \* \* "Woman is inferior to man; God and nature declare the fact; but where the cause of quarrel between the two? The child is inferior to its parents; but no war can grow up between them. In the last cases, the inferiority and subjection have ever been recognised. Not so with capital and la-

bor. They have never ceased to fight for the mastery, and they NEVER will, until their true relations are recognised and acted upon by society. If this were done, their clashing interests would be harmonized and made identical. How and where is this done? We answer, that it is accomplished by slavery, as it exists in the Southern States." \* \* \* "Slavery is the corner stone of our republicanism." \* \* \* "Slavery is the great peacemaker between capital and labor."

Here, sir, you have the *Democratic solution* of this great problem. This struggle between capital and labor will never end, it is said, "until their true relations are recognised and acted upon by society," and the laborer is owned by the capitalist. Nor is it proposed to confine the blessings of slavery to the negro race alone. The white laborer, in the opinion of these Democratic leaders, comes also within the principle upon which they justify slavery; and they claim that the right of one man to own another "does not depend upon difference in complexion." I quote again from the *Richmond Enquirer*:

"The South now maintains that slavery is right, natural, and necessary. It shows that all divine and almost all human authority justifies it. The South further charges that the little experiment of free society in western Europe has been from the beginning a cruel failure, and that symptoms of failure are abundant in our North. While it is far more obvious that negroes be slaves than whites—for they are only fit to labor, not to direct—yet the principle of slavery is in itself right, and not does depend on difference of complexion."

Again, Mr. Fitzhugh, in a book entitled *Failure of Free Society*, circulated extensively in the South, says:

"We do not adopt the theory that Ham was the ancestor of the negro race. The Jewish slaves were not negroes, and to confine the justification of slavery to that race would be to weaken its scriptural authority, and to lose the whole weight of profane authority, for we read of no negro slavery in ancient times." \* \* \* "Slavery, black or white, is right and necessary." \* \* \* "The slaves are governed far better than the free laborers at the North are governed. Our negroes are not only better off as to physical comfort than free laborers, but their moral condition is better." Page 98.

From the same book, on page 179, I quote the following:

"Men are not 'born entitled to equal rights.' It would be far nearer the truth to say that some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them; and the riding does them good."

Now, sir, viewing the homestead bill from the Democratic stand-point, and by the light of modern Democratic doctrines and principles, it must be conceded by all that that party is strictly consistent in opposing it. Modern De-

mocracy would crush the laborer, and reduce him to a mere chattel. This measure will cause "labor to look up in the midst of toil, and be proud."

Modern Democracy would place the lands of the nation in the hands of the capitalist, and permit him to buy and sell the tillers of the soil—negroes if convenient, if not, white men; for its doctrine is, that "*the principle of slavery is right in itself, and does not depend on difference of complexion.*" The homestead bill will divide the public domain into small quantities, and make every tiller of the soil an independent freeman.

Candor requires me to say, sir, that I do not believe such sentiments as those I have quoted are entertained by the *entire* Democratic party; but they are the sentiments and principles of those who lead that party and control its councils. As a party, you are opposed to the interests of free labor, and seek, by your legislation, to protect and build up the capitalist. Democracy in the North and West is quite a different thing from Democracy in the South; but it is very evident that the Democratic party in the former sections is powerless, and is rapidly becoming an extinct institution. It may be truthfully written upon all its tents, as upon the tents of the Indian tribes of the West, "Passing away! passing away!" The chief difference there noticeable, between the Indian tribes and the Democracy, is, that the former have gone in a Westerly and the latter in a Southerly direction. The one seeks to escape from the presence of the white man, and enjoy the blessings of liberty upon the wild, free prairies of the West; while the former turns his back upon the free white laborer, and seeks the blessings of slavery on the negro plantations of the South.

We have seen, sir, how this beneficent measure has hitherto been treated by the Democratic party in Congress. I now beg the indulgence of the House for a few moments while I examine the position of this Administration, elected to its present position by the Democracy of the country, in relation to it, as disclosed in the annual report of the Secretary of the Interior for the year 1859.

In speaking of the "expectation in the public mind" that Congress would pass the homestead bill, the honorable Secretary says:

"The enactment of a law embracing such objects would work a change hostile to all preceding legislation in reference to the public lands—a change, in my judgment, *unsound in principle, and fraught with ruinous consequences* in its practical application."

In support of the opinion that an act which the public expect us to pass, and which five-sixths of the people of this country demand at our hands, would be "*unsound in principle, and fraught with ruinous consequences,*" the honorable Secretary, speaking doubtless in the name of his party—at least as its head in this Department—urges the following reasons:

"The public lands of the United States con-

stitute a legacy of inestimable value, which, if wisely administered, will be the basis of a public credit far more substantial than is possessed by any other nation in the world. The price at which the public lands are now sold is little if any above prime cost, if we take into account the expense of removing the Indians and protecting the Western frontier; and it is but just that those who appropriate to themselves the richest tracts and choicest locations, and who especially have the protection of Government while doing so, should make some reasonable return in money."

I concede, sir, with pride, that the public lands of the United States constitute a "legacy of inestimable value;" but I maintain that this legacy belongs to the people, and not to that intangible thing called Government; and I will ever oppose, to the utmost of my limited capacity, that sentiment—already too prevalent—which would centralize the wealth of the nation, instead of distributing it among the people.

A State is great, rich, and powerful, not in proportion to the mass of wealth which it may accumulate in its treasury, but in proportion as the men who constitute it are prosperous, honest, brave, and happy. The accumulation and centralization of wealth in the public Treasury has a direct tendency to corrupt those who make and execute the laws, and to impoverish the people. The history of the world abounds in proofs of the fact, that just in proportion as the State grows rich, the people become poor. I claim that this "legacy" spoken of by the honorable Secretary is not one to be used by the nation, as such, as a basis of public credit, and for the purpose of centralizing power in the hands of a few favorites of the Government, but that, by all the principles of sound policy and justice, humanity and right, it belongs to *the people*, and that Congress is only the trustee of this splendid patrimony, and in duty bound so to execute the trust that the rightful owners—the people—may enjoy the full benefit of it.

But it is claimed that "the price at which the public lands are now sold is but little, if any, above prime cost," &c.; and the conclusion is, that the Government cannot afford to make the distribution contemplated by this bill. All the reply which I desire to make to the argument of the Secretary and of my Democratic friends on this point, is to call their attention to the report of the Secretary of the Interior in 1850, by which it is shown that the public lands had then paid for themselves, and left a surplus of \$60,000,000 in the Treasury. The receipts from the sales of public lands since 1850 amount to over forty million dollars; so that it appears the Government has been fully repaid the amount of money expended for them, and has also extracted a profit from the hard earnings of the pioneer, amounting to the very comfortable sum of over one hundred million dollars. It is said, also, by this Democratic Administration, in the report



of the honorable Secretary, that it is but just and fair that those who take these lands "should make some reasonable return in money."

This objection may look very plausible, sir, to those who have been reared in luxury and ease; who occupy high offices in this city under the Federal Government, and whose pockets are filled with this "reasonable return;" but I would respectfully invite such persons to come with me to the pioneer settlements of the West, and, if I mistake not, they will return wiser if not better men. They will find there a people industrious, frugal, intelligent, brave, and generous, before whose sturdy blows the wilderness is rapidly disappearing, and the prairies waving with golden grain, but who, when the Government requires from them this "reasonable return," are, in thousands of instances, unable to meet the demand. Or if, by denying to their wives and children the common comforts and necessities of life, they are able to pay the last farthing demanded by this inexorable creditor, (the Government,) they are left destitute of the means of educating their children, and of improving and stocking their farms; and, from sheer necessity, are compelled to mortgage them, and thus place themselves in the power of some remorseless speculator or Shylock, who finally sweeps away from them their humble homes, and with them the hopes by which they had been sustained during years of toil and privation. Then, forced on by his unconquerable will and determination, the pioneer strikes out further into the western wilds; toils and suffers, hopes and endures, until the hoarse voice of the Government official is again heard, and his homestead is again sold to increase the wealth of some speculator, and to fill the insatiable maw of the public Treasury. The honorable Secretary of the Interior says that "the true pioneer spends his life in the woods. When the frontier moves, he moves with it."

'Tis true, 'tis pity;  
And pity 'tis, 'tis true."

The reason of its truth in many instances may be found in the unjust and oppressive policy of the Government.

It is further suggested by the Administration, that this measure will diminish the revenues of the Government. It would be a very easy task, sir, to show that it would have precisely the opposite effect; and that, by bringing these lands under cultivation, increasing the wealth of the people, and placing the means of purchasing articles on which duties are paid to the Government in the hands of millions who are now unable to buy them, you would add vastly more to the revenues than by the present unjust and cruel system of taxing the people for the "right to live."

In order that we may understand the force of this argument of *necessity*, and also appreciate the grace with which it comes from the present Administration, let us examine for a moment the expenditures of the Government.

And for the purpose of instituting comparisons not very flattering, perhaps, to the "powers that be," I will read, by decades, from a "statement of the receipts and expenditures of the Government," published by authority of the Senate. The total appropriations, exclusive of the public debt, in the year 1800, were \$7,314,949; in 1810, \$6,729,322; in 1820, \$8,435,466; in 1830, \$13,588,681; in 1840, \$26,112,593; in 1850, \$47,162,506; and for the year ending June 30, 1858, the enormous sum of \$71,901,129.75. The same statement from which I read shows that the average yearly receipts from the sales of the public lands for the last thirty years have been less than three million dollars per annum. Thus you perceive that the income from the public lands, under the existing system, furnishes but a very small proportion of the revenues of the Government, and contributes but a drop to the vast ocean of Democratic extravagance and profligacy by which this country has been deluged for the last three years.

Whilst this Administration has (as appears by the statement just read) in a single year, and in a time of profound peace with all the world, except Utah, squandered over TWENTY MILLIONS more of the people's money than was ever expended in any one year before the inauguration of President Buchanan's reckless system of expenditure, we are now told, by this same Administration, that it is unwise to pass the homestead bill, because it will reduce the revenues. The people, who ask their God-given rights to homes and the means of subsistence, are to be denied them, in order that the Administration may have money to squander by the million on party pets and favorites, to corrupt the ballot-box, and wrest from the people the dearest rights of freemen. Sir, if this Democratic party is to continue in power for a few years longer, (which dire curse may merciful Heaven avert!) it will become necessary to sell, not only the public lands of the nation, but the private lands of individuals. Curtail your expenditures; cease to carry elections by bribery, when it cannot be accomplished by fraud; lop off your thousands of unnecessary offices, which were created solely for the purpose of rewarding those to whom you were indebted for political services. Let the people who may hereafter wish to come into the Union under a free Constitution, do so; and do not, by means of the power and wealth of the Government, endeavor to force a Constitution upon them which is odious to every feeling of their nature and every instinct of humanity, and you will then have revenue in abundance to carry on the Government, without denying to the people that which they of right demand at your hands.

The honorable Secretary, in support of his position, goes on:

"If lands now be given to settlers in consideration of residence only, on what pretext will Congress refuse those who have heretofore completed the prescribed period of resi-

'dence a return of the money which they have already paid for their homesteads?"

In my humble opinion, sir, the fact that we have pursued a wrong policy in the past, furnishes no very conclusive or satisfactory reason for continuing it in the future. It may, perhaps, be impossible for the Government to repair all the wrongs which have resulted from its misguided land policy; but the bill introduced by my colleague [Mr. ALDRICH] remedies them as far as is practicable, and prevents their future occurrence. It gives to those who have already entered upon their lands, under existing pre-emption laws, the same benefits as are conferred upon those who shall hereafter go upon them.

Again, the honorable Secretary of the Interior says:

"Should, however, the new policy of a *gratuitous* distribution of the public lands be adopted, it is evident that *while an undue stimulus would be given to emigration*, land bounty can no longer be held out as an inducement to future military service."

What is meant here, sir, by "emigration?" Is it emigration from the old States of the Confederacy to the new ones which the Secretary of the Interior is afraid of stimulating? Is this Administration the peculiar guardian of the interests of only one portion of the Union? Does it fear that the old States cannot compete with the new ones in the race for empire on this continent, and that, therefore, the strong and powerful must be protected against the weak? Does the Administration understand the advantages of soil and climate in the great Northwest, and fear the effect of emigration upon a certain "peculiar institution," for which it manifests so much tender regard? If none of these things are intended by the Secretary, it must be that he fears, and would discourage, emigration from foreign lands. The latter, I presume, is the true meaning of the report. I have long known, that although the Democratic party is profuse of praise of our naturalized fellow-citizens when votes are wanted from them, yet the controlling power in that party will stab them in the dark whenever an opportunity is presented. It is but natural that such should be the case. The god at whose shrine that party pays its adoration is the Moloch, slavery; and they know full well that the emigrant who comes to this country, to escape the despotism of his own, will not long be found among *such* worshippers.

As the shouts of the populace and the beating of drums in the valley of Tophet drowned the cries of children burnt in sacrifice to the ancient Moloch, so the name "Democracy" may, for a little while, charm and mislead the foreign-born citizen, and the pæans which are sung to that name may, for a short time, divert their minds from the enormities of its practices and real principles. But the men who come here from foreign lands with hearts yearning for freedom cannot long be deluded by such things, and the Democracy know it. They know, also, that a very large proportion of the

emigrants from Europe locate in the North and West, and they feel that, when those men have once tasted the blessings of liberty, they cannot be safely trusted to bind fetters upon others, to oppose the interests of free labor, and to extend the area of human slavery. I therefore repeat, it is quite natural to expect that party to be at heart, opposed to the emigrant. It is also in accordance with the known rules of human conduct for them to charge hostility to the emigrant upon the Republican party. The rogue who has your money in his pocket is always first to raise the cry of "stop thief!"

I am therefore not at all astonished, Mr. Chairman, that the Administration should urge this as one of the objections to the homestead bill. Nor am I in the least surprised that the only Democratic Senator who has ever taken any interest in favor of this measure [Senator JOHNSON, of Tennessee] should have lately introduced into the Senate a homestead bill which confers its benefits only on *CITIZENS of the United States*; thus compelling the emigrant to remain here five years before he can enter upon the public lands, and ten years before he can obtain a patent. Nor did it excite in my mind the least degree of astonishment when, during the protracted contest for Speaker of this House, I saw the entire Democratic party, save only three, forgetting that which at home they profess to be their "chief joy," forgetting their professions of ardent and undying love for the naturalized citizen, and in an almost unbroken phalanx going over to the support of a gentleman for Speaker [Mr. SMITH, of North Carolina] who was elected a member of this House by the American party, and who was formally presented as the *caucus nominee* of that organization. The nomination of Mr. SMITH was made by Mr. MALLORY, of Kentucky, an American, who stated that he "*had been instructed by his party to nominate Mr. SMITH, of North Carolina, as their nominee for the Speakership.*"

Now, sir, for one, I have no fears of giving "*an undue stimulus to emigration.*" I prefer the bill of my colleague to the one introduced in the Senate, for the reason that its provisions are broader and more liberal. The Senate bill confines its benefits to *citizens of the United States* only, whilst that of my colleague, and also that of the honorable gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. GROW,] extend them to all persons who, at the time of entering upon their lands, have *declared their intention* to become citizens, provided their naturalization is perfected before the issuance of the patent.

The early theory of the founders of this Republic was, that it should be an asylum for the oppressed of all nations who chose to seek refuge under our flag. The temple of liberty erected upon this continent by our fathers was reared at the expense of seven long years of toil and endurance.

The blood of the noble and generous friends of freedom from foreign lands was mingled

with that of America's bravest sons in its consecration. As the heroes of the Revolution looked upon this work of their hands—the noblest the world had ever known—their hearts swelled with pride and joy at the thought that its spacious arches were broad enough to protect every human being on the whole earth in whose soul the Creator had planted a love of freedom. Let us emulate them in their liberal views and policy. Keep wide open the doors of that magnificent temple. Let the emigrant come to our shores if he desires to do so. Let him help us to cultivate our lands, build our towns and cities, railroads and canals, and enjoy with us the inestimable blessings of freedom; and when the hour of peril to the country shall come—if come it must—you will ever find him in the future, as you have done in the past, true to the principles of liberty, and ready to bare his strong arm in the contest for the right.

A word, Mr. Chairman, upon the other branch of the objection last quoted: that if the new policy proposed by this measure should be adopted, "bounty land can no longer be held out as an inducement to future military service," and that therefore the military strength of the nation will be diminished.

It is, sir, in my opinion, little less than a slander upon the patriotic volunteer of this Republic, to say that when he hears the clarion notes of war calling him to the defence of his country's rights and honor, and, fearless of danger and death, he rushes to the bloody conflict, the motives which prompt his heroism are such as those attributed to him by the honorable Secretary. No, sir; he has a higher, purer, nobler, incentive to action! The merely mercenary soldier exhibits no such valor and patriotism as does the American volunteer when vindicating the honor of his country on the battle-field. If you would "encourage a prompt response to a call for volunteers in time of war," give every man a home to love and defend—a home whose hearthstone shall be made sacred to his heart by the pure affections of wife and children—and you will have an army of volunteers which the combined wealth and power of the world can neither bribe nor subdue! You will have on every farm and in every cottage a sentinel upon the watch-tower of liberty! You will have encircled the nation with a cordon of valiant hearts and strong arms, more impregnable than gates of brass or battlements of stone!

So far, sir, from being "unsound in principle," it seems to me this bill is founded upon the soundest principles of national policy. Its leading object is to encourage and build up the agricultural interest of the country—an interest which has no equal in importance, and yet one which has hitherto been sadly neglected. "Independent farmers are everywhere the bases of society and the true friends of liberty," said the immortal Jackson.

Daniel Webster, in speaking of this subject, once said:

"Agriculture feeds us; in a great degree, it clothes us; without it we could not have manufactures, and we should not have commerce. These all stand together; but they stand together like pillars in a column, the largest in the centre; and that largest is agriculture."

I am no advocate for that policy which looks only to the building up of large cities, and neglects that interest which constitutes the basis of national prosperity. As an American citizen, I feel proud of our magnificent cities, which have grown up as if by magic within a few years; but I am prouder far of our millions of cultivated fields, and our thousands of thriving villages.

The men who are to preserve the institutions of this country, and to carry it onward to that glorious destiny which awaits it, will not be reared in your cities, or in palaces of wealth; but they will come from the humble cottage of the farmer, and the workshop of the artisan. It is upon the farm, and in the workshop, that those lessons of virtue and those principles of self-reliance are learned, which make the true man and the true patriot. Your cities would become intolerable cesspools of vice and immorality, were it not that a better element, from the rural districts is continually pouring into and purifying them. Politically, they would be cancerous sores, which would corrupt the whole nation, were it not that the rabble who so often control elections in them are themselves controlled by the farmers, mechanics, and artisans, of the country.

But, sir, the beneficent effects of this measure will not be confined to any one portion or section of the Republic. By its adoption, you will increase the population and agricultural products of the West. You will provide homes for your sons, brothers, friends, and neighbors, in the older States; and they, in turn, will furnish a market for the manufactured articles of the East, and the cotton and sugar of the South, and at the same time supply the means of subsistence to the hundreds of thousands of needy poor who now throng your Eastern and Southern cities.

But it is suggested that this bill proposes to make a "*gratuitous* distribution" of the public lands. It proposes no such thing. It proceeds upon the principle of a consideration received by the Government, and I maintain that this consideration is ample; that the man who, undergoing the hardships and privations, and encountering the labors and dangers, incident to pioneer life, subdues, improves, and cultivates one hundred and sixty acres of wild land, does more for the Government than would be done for him under the provisions of this bill. All the unnumbered millions of acres belonging to the United States are utterly worthless until they are rendered valuable by the persevering industry of the settler; and every cent which is received from the sale of these lands is a tax imposed upon the industry of the occupant and cultivator. The title to all that vast domain included within the valley of the Mississippi

would have remained in the Government without a bidder until doomsday, if the bold and hardy pioneer had not erected upon them his cabin, brought them under cultivation, and thus made them a source of profit and wealth to the nation.

As I am better acquainted with the condition and history of my own State than any other, I will take it as an illustration of the benefits the country would derive from the occupancy and cultivation of the public domain. And here permit me to read an extract from a late message of Hon. Alexander Ramsey, the present Governor of that State:

"Contrast the condition of the State of Minnesota to-day with that of the Territory of Minnesota ten years ago. Then no thriving towns dotted our fertile prairies, or welcomed the steamboat to their crowded levees; no steamboats daily ploughed our navigable waters; no mills on every stream converted the monarchs of the forest into lumber, or the cereal growth into flour; and the unfurrowed fields smiled with no bountiful harvest. The population of the Territory scarcely reached five thousand, and the total valuation of property was but little over eight hundred thousand dollars."

"The present population is probably one hundred and eighty thousand. The assessed value of taxable property for 1858 was over *forty million dollars.*" \* \* \*

"The following statistics are prepared from a township canvass, embracing nearly every district, and are undoubtedly reliable. They show the present extent of our farming interest, which will always be the leading one; and also the fitness and capabilities of our soil and climate for agricultural purposes:

	Acres.
Whole area under cultivation, 1859 -	464,600
Number of farms - - - -	21,533
Average of tilled land per farm -	21½
PRODUCTS OF 1859.	
Bushels of wheat harvested -	3,435,950
"    corn    "    - - -	3,476,950
"    oats    "    - - -	3,309,480
"    potatoes, about - - -	3,000,000

"The average yield of wheat per acre for the last year, in this State, was over twenty bushels. This, which is nearly double the average yield in the so-called wheat-growing States, indicates either an extraordinary year, or a better adaptation of soil and climate to wheat culture."

Now, sir, estimating the wheat crop of Minnesota at only ninety cents per bushel, her corn at thirty cents, her oats at twenty cents, and her potatoes at twenty-five cents, you have, as the proceeds of one year's labor, \$5,547,336. Supposing those twenty-one thousand five hundred and thirty-three farms to be worth, in the possession of the Government, \$200 each, they would amount to the sum of \$4,306,600—a sum less, by \$1,240,736, than the industry of the people has drawn from the soil in a single year. Add to this the fact, that, by developing

this country, the settlers of that State have in ten years increased the aggregate wealth of the nation \$40,000,000; and if the theory be correct, that it is better the nation's wealth should be in the hands of the people than in the public Treasury, I ask if those twenty-one thousand five hundred and thirty-three farmers have not done more for the Government than would have been done for them if their homes had been obtained under the provisions of a bill like this?

The country now known as Minnesota has for ages possessed the same salubrious and delightful climate; the same pure, clear, invigorating atmosphere; the same majestic rivers traversing her territory, from one extremity to the other; the same crystal streams, gushing from her mountains, and murmuring through her flowery prairies, and the same beautiful scenery and fertile soil. But of what value were all these things to the nation, until the axe and plough of the pioneer took the place of the bow and scalping-knife of the savage, and the teepee of the Indian gave way to the church, the school-house, and the thriving village of the white settler? There was untold wealth hidden in her inexhaustible soil; but it was valueless to the Government until drawn forth by the patient industry of the farmer.

The determination and tireless energy of the people of that State have done much to develop the country and increase the wealth of the nation; but their progress is in no way the result of your land system. Your policy has been to turn loose upon them, as upon the citizens of other new States, a horde of speculators and "sharks," who have entered large tracts of land, and will neither improve them themselves nor permit others to do so; and who are now very contentedly waiting in their comfortable and perhaps luxurious Eastern or Southern homes, until the labor of the settler upon his own land shall enhance the value of theirs. Had it not been for the fact that the farmers of Minnesota were compelled to pay to the Government for those twenty-one thousand five hundred and thirty-three farms the enormous sum of over four million dollars, as we have just seen, they would have been able to improve and cultivate a much greater amount of land; they would have been free from debt; the proceeds of last year's labor would have been \$10,000,000 instead of \$5,000,000; and the taxable property of the State \$100,000,000, instead of \$40,000,000. Thus, sir, the effect of your false land system has been to cripple the energy of the settler, and retard the development of the country.

Let this bill pass, let monopolies in land be forever destroyed, let every man who is willing to work have a homestead of his own, and before a quarter of a century shall have passed away, a score of mighty and prosperous States, the pride of the Republic and the admiration of the world, will leap forth from the great valleys, prairies, and forests, of the West, like youthful giants, rejoicing in their strength.